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AUTHOR	Mogle, Grant
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ABSTRACT

To assess the degree of importance and use of the vocational information system, Utah "Project View," as perceived by selected students and counselors in several Utah high schools and junior high schools during the 1971-72 school year, questionnaires were distributed to a random sample of 1,765 students from 16 high schools and 6 junior high schools as well as 24 counselors from those schools. Data obtained from the survey revealed that: (1) Only about half of the students sampled are making use of occupational career information, (2) Less than 14 percent were able to recognize the VIEW materials, (3) Less than 8 percent who were able to recognize sources of the information preferred to use the VIEW materials, (4) Students feel that VIEW materials received little use as compared to other career information; however, counselors felt just the opposite, and (5) The most recognized used source of career information is the SRA "Career Exploration Kit." Based on these findings, recommendations were made that: (1) the VIEW materials not be up-dated, (2) an effort be made to evaluate other career information sources superficially investigated in this study, (3) further studies be made to determine why VIEW materials are not used, and (4) in those schools where VIEW materials receive wide use, the "master-deck" be made available for reproduction. (Author/SN)

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VOCATIONAL INFORMATION FOR EDUCATION AND WORK

(PROJECT VIEW - UTAH SCHOOLS)

Utah State Board of Education

Walter D. Talbot, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

October, 1972

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VOCATIONAL INFORMATION FOR EDUCATION AND WORK

(PROJECT VIEW - UTAH SCHOOLS)

Principal Investigator: Grant Mogle

Project Director: G. Warren Gaddis

OFFICE OF UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Walter D. Talbot
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Lerue Winget
Deputy Superintendent for Instruction

RESEARCH COORDINATING UNIT FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Quentin Utley, Administrator

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October 1972

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FOREWORD

It is important that children in Utah's schools be provided information that is adequate to assist them in making career decisions and that it is in a format that encourages use. However, if materials are not used, expenditure to maintain them should be stopped and efforts made to provide materials that will be used.

The study reported herein was undertaken in order to determine at least tentatively the extent of use and usefulness of the information materials developed in 1967 and distributed to the schools as "Utah Project VIEW." From such information, a decision is to be made as to whether use of the materials justifies continued expenditure to publish them and added costs to up-date them.

Walter D. Talbot
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

With a fast changing and ever-expanding world, educators have found it necessary to design information systems for our secondary schools that can disseminate career information to the students as fast and accurately as possible. These systems should be relevant and up-dated to the vocational information needs of students today to help them get an accurate account of any career they are interested in as a future vocational choice.

Currently there are several vocational information systems being utilized throughout the United States, but there has been very little data available to support the usefulness or relevance of these systems. This study was carried out to examine one such system (Project VIEW) that has been in use in Utah since 1967.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess the degree of importance and use of the vocational information system, Utah "Project VIEW," as perceived by selected students and counselors in several Utah high schools and junior high schools during the 1971-72 school year.

Background

In 1967 and 1968 an innovative project was undertaken to develop a more effective way of disseminating world of work information to high school students. The project included the development of a "deck" of aperture cards and a key-sort system for retrieval of individual cards. In addition, book-form bound copies of the information were published

and distributed to all of the secondary schools in Utah. Since the original publication of the aperture cards and the bound copies, requests received for additional copies have required two reprintings. The project was named "Vocational Information for Education and Work" or more simply, "Utah Project VIEW."

The job-oriented information presented in the materials is now about five years old, and it was evident that if it were to be continued in use it needed to be up-dated. The justification for up-dating was to improve the value of the information and the system and to assist students in learning about career opportunities in the world of work.

Definition of Terms

Vocational Information systems. Integrated support systems designed to facilitate the function of the counselor in helping the students find vocational information as quickly and accurately as possible.

Aperture cards. 2½ x 6 inch cards in which vocational information is recorded on a 2 x 1 inch piece of microfilm which is read using a special reader-scanner.

Key-sort system. A method of selecting a single VIEW aperture card from the "deck" of 125 on the basis of key words or phrases descriptive of various jobs.

Bound book. A full size (8½ x 11 inch) printed copy of the same vocational information as contained on microfilm aperture cards.

Delimitations

Since it was impossible to survey the use of the project materials by students in past years, this study examined only those students who used the materials during the 1971-1972 school year; however, counselors

were included who have used the materials for the past five years. This study concerned itself with only the amount of use and preference for the project VIEW materials as seen by students and counselors in the sample schools.

Questions to be Answered

The questions this study sought to answer were, 1) To what extent are the VIEW aperture cards and bound books used compared to other similar materials by students and counselors? 2) Which vocational information system is preferred?

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A questionnaire was developed that was designed to obtain information from each student and counselor regarding the above questions on the use of and preference for Project VIEW materials compared to other similar materials.

Sample

A random sample of 1,765 students from each of 16 high schools and 6 junior high schools were taken from the school rolls, grades seven through twelve. Student respondents were selected by taking every fifth student appearing on the school roll in the larger schools and every fourth student in the smaller schools. All counselors in the randomly selected schools were asked to respond. Figure 1, below, depicts the distribution of the sample of students.

Table 1

Sample Distribution of Students by Grade Level and Number and Type of School

Number of schools and grades sampled		Grades 7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Large schools (Avg. 100 students/ school)	high schools				x	x	x	7
	junior high schools	x	x	x				3
Small schools (Avg. 50 students/ school)	high schools			x	x	x	x	9
	junior high schools	x	x	x				3
Number of students/grade		159	194	318	335	335	424	1765
% of sample		9%	11%	18%	19%	19%	24%	100%

Procedure

The selected students were brought together during the first hour of the day. The investigator distributed the instructions and questionnaire. After the questionnaires were completed they were collected by the investigator. The counselor questionnaires were mailed with instructions and a return envelope was provided.

Description of Schools and Students

Large high schools. The large high schools were those that had enrollments of about 2,000 students in grades ten through twelve. They were mostly in urban or suburban communities with about 15 percent of the students coming from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the remaining 85 percent from Anglo-European.

Small high schools. The small high schools were those with enrollments of about 1,000 or fewer in grades nine or ten through twelve. Most of the students came from rural or semi-rural homes and a significant number had parents who were in agricultural or agriculture-related jobs. The schools were about 5 percent Indian or other minority groups in population with the remaining 95 percent Anglo-European.

Junior high schools. The junior high schools represented closely resembled the high schools in their population configurations. The large junior high schools enrolled about 800 students in grades 7-9; the small junior high schools enrolled 400 or fewer in grades 7-9.

Significance of the Project

The aspect of vocational guidance with which this study was concerned was that of transmittal of guidance information to pupils of secondary level age. Guidance information includes information about the

world of work; educational opportunities; personal and social development; and data about self. Transmittal refers to those processes by which information is organized, processed, presented and used by pupils, teachers, counselors and parents.

Vocational information like all other information presented does not have value in and of itself, according to Arbuckle (1960). The skill and creativity in the presentation of the material may be remembered long after the information itself is forgotten.

There is very little research data available on vocational information systems. Many experts in the field of vocational counseling have defined the need for such systems, but little has been accomplished to meet the challenge of disseminating updated information to high school students.

Evans (1969) states that during the present decade the needed external arrangements for storage, organization, and retrieval of information are becoming the objects of widespread concern. To the old array of published abstracts and indexes and to the traditional library services, new schemes have been and are being added: published lists of careers, citation indexes, referral services, clearing houses and exchanges, automated searching systems, selective dissemination systems, and so on. Tiedeman (1966) reports that it is becoming apparent that improved methods of information processing are essential if the vocational counselor is to improve the quality of "career knowledge" he and his client develop. Kroll (1969) reports that there are many difficulties in establishing and maintaining a comprehensive indexing service. Since few producers of occupational literature, be they commercial or public, maintain mailing lists of potential users of such information, an acquisitive library

must maintain a continuous research operation. This search process usually necessitates direct correspondence with the publishers. Furthermore, once materials have been acquired, they must be individually classified for indexing, storage and retrieval. The endeavors are time consuming and costly.

In summarizing vocational guidance information systems, Loughary and Bowman (1970) report that with encouraging exception here and there, most of the guidance information systems in today's schools are little better than they were 20 or 30 years ago. Whether or not they were adequate then, they certainly are not now, especially in light of the students' cry for greater relevancy and society's insistence that education serve all youth.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that only 49.3 percent (869) of the 1,765 students surveyed had used any source of career or vocational information during the 1971-72 shcool year. This figure is compared to the counselors surveyed who reported they all used some occupational and career planning information during that school year; 100% reported use of some (unspecified) materials.

Table 2

Percent of Students and Counselors Using Occupational and Career Information Sometime During the 1971-72 School Year

Students (N=1,765)		Counselors (N=24)	
Yes	49.3%	Yes	100%
No	36.3%	No	0%
Uncertain	14.4%	Uncertain	0%

Table 2 shows that only 13.9 percent (245) of the 1,765 students surveyed were familiar with the VIEW Handbook and only 13.6 percent (240) of the students were familiar with the VIEW Micro-film Cards and Reader. Students were more familiar with all other resources. One hundred percent of the counselors were familiar with the VIEW Handbook and 90.5 percent (22) of them were familiar with the VIEW Micro-film Cards and Reader.

Table 3

Percent of Students and Counselors That Could Recognize the Following Sources of Career and Occupational Information

Information Sources	Students (N=1,765)	Counselors (N=24)
	%	%
S.R.A. Career Exploration Kits	26.9	100.0
Job Information Series	22.4	95.2
Occupational Outlook	17.3	100.0
Encyclopedia of Careers	16.4	95.2
Careers Desk Top Kits	16.4	90.5
Chronicle Occupation Library	14.3	90.5
V.I.E.W. Micro-film Cards and Reader	13.6	90.5
V.I.E.W. Handbook	13.9	100.0

Assuming that even though they had not used any materials, they had the potential to recognize materials, the data in Table 2 would indicate that in terms of numbers of students, no more than 121 of the 1,765 children sampled actually could recognize the VIEW materials as a source of occupational-career information. This number can be compared to the 234 children of the sample - almost twice as many - who recognized the SRA Career Exploration Kits. Neither number is properly close to 1,765.

In Table 3 are reported the distribution of preferences of students and counselors for various materials. Only 3.7 percent of the students surveyed reported that they considered the VIEW Handbook as their preferred source of occupational and career information; this was a ranking of 7th of 9 choices. Only 4.8 percent of the counselors would make the handbook their first choice for students; this was a ranking of 4th of 5 ranks, tied with 2 other sources that were also number 4. The VIEW Micro-film Cards and Reader were also rated low, with 7.9 percent of the students and 14.1 percent of the counselors rating the Reader as their first choice. (Ranks of 3rd of 8, of 3rd of 5, respectively).

Table 4

Percent of Students and Counselors That Prefer Using the Following Sources of Career and Occupational Information

Information Sources	Student (N=1,765)	Counselor (N=24)
	%	%
S.R.A. Career Exploration Kits	17.3	28.6
Occupational Outlook	8.2	20.8
V.I.E.W. Micro-film Cards and Reader	7.9	17.0
Job Information Series	6.4	14.1
Encyclopedia of Careers	5.8	4.8
Careers Desk Top Kits	5.6	4.8
Chronicle Occupation Library	3.7	4.8
V.I.E.W. Handbook	3.7	4.8
Other	.6	0
Not Familiar with Any of the Above	40.8	0

As noted above (Table 2) only about 121 children recognized the VIEW materials. Therefore, the number of students who prefer using them could only be about 18 compared to about 41 of the 234 children recognizing them, who preferred the SRA materials.

Table 4 shows that opinions were mixed between students and counselors on the amount of use of the VIEW programs in the schools surveyed. Other occupational and career-oriented programs received little use, and opinions about use were similarly mixed. There was complete agreement, however, that the S.R.A. "Career Exploration Kits" received most use.

Table 5

Career and Occupational Information Systems
Reported by Students and Counselors
as Receiving Most Use

Information Sources	Students (N=1,045) (40.8% not familiar with any materials)	Counselors (N=24)
	%	%
S.R.A. Career Exploration Kits	17.3	24.0
Occuptational Outlook Handbook	8.2	20.0
Encyclopedia of Careers	7.9	20.0
V.I.E.W. cards and Reader	6.8	16.0
Job Information Series	5.9	8.0
Chronicle Occupation Library	5.1	8.0
Careers Desk Top Kits	4.8	4.0
V.I.E.W. Handbook	3.7	1.0

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made:

1. Only about half (869) of the sampled students in grades 7-12 are making use of occupational-career information; the distribution of this held among the six grades is not known. If the sample is representative of the population, only about 66,000 of the approximately 134,000 children in the State, grades 7-12, are using occupational-career information.

2. Less than 14% of the sampled students in grades 7-12 were able to recognize the VIEW materials. If this percentage is projected to the State's population of children, grades 7-12, only about 18,000 of the 134,000 children in these grades know of the VIEW materials.

3. Less than 8% of the sampled students who are able to recognize sources of occupational-career information (121) preferred (18) to use the VIEW materials. Projecting this figure to the State's population, grades 7-12, fewer than 1,500 students (of approximately 36,000 who would recognize any materials) would prefer VIEW materials.

4. Students think, in corroboration of conclusion #3 above, that VIEW materials receive little use compared to other occupational-career information; counselors, however, think the VIEW materials receive comparatively more use. The reason for this discrepancy is not known.

5. The most recognized, preferred, and used source of occupational-career information is the SRA "Career Exploration Kit." Students and counselors agreed, in every analysis, on this point. However, no single system is recognized or used by more than 27% of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions contained herein, it is recommended that:

1. The VIEW materials (both in the handbook and microfilm cards/reader-printer forms) not be up-dated or re-published at State expense unless other evidence supporting their value is uncovered.

2. An effort be made to determine the value, in terms of effect on students' behaviors in career planning, of occupational-career information sources of the kind superficially investigated in this study.

3. Further studies of the VIEW materials be carried out to determine why they are not used.

4. For those schools and students where the VIEW materials receive wide use, the "master-deck" be made available for their use for VIEW deck reproduction at their expense.

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